DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 708 IR 053 591

TITLE Services to the Nation: The Library of Congress.
INSTITUTION Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 17p.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Copyrights; Cultural Activities; *Federal Government; *Government Libraries; Library Collection Development; Library Facilities; Library Materials; Library Role; Library Services; *National Libraries; Preservation; United States History
IDENTIFIERS *Library of Congress

ABSTRACT

This pamphlet describes the many services that the Library of Congress (LC) provides. A brief historical background of the Library's founding is followed by descriptions of LC's buildings and facilities. Other topics which are presented include the library's extensive collection, which runs the gamut from papyrus to optical disk; services to Congress; Copyright Office activities; scholarly resources; services to libraries; and cultural programs. Information for visitors to the library concludes the pamphlet. (MAB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 332708

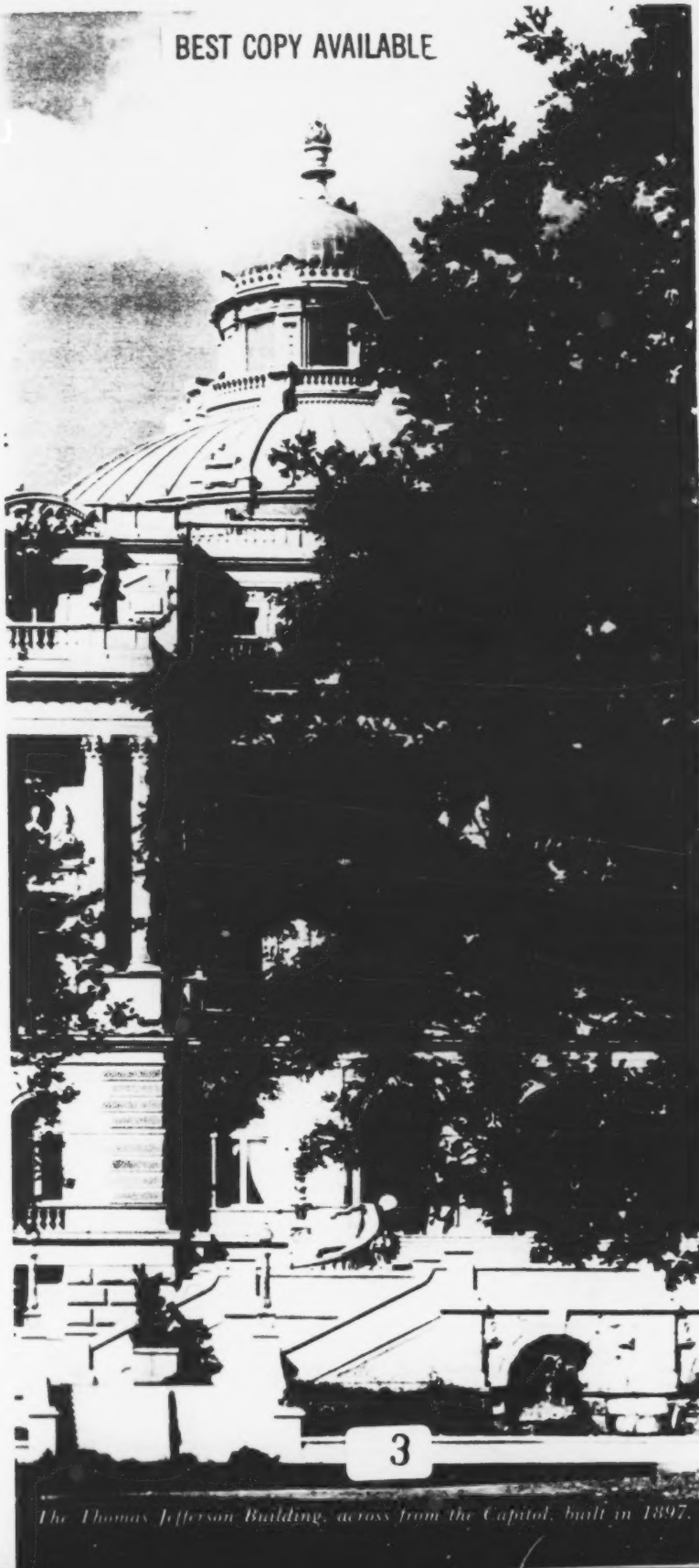
SERVICES TO THE NATION

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

IR 053 511

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



The Thomas Jefferson Building, across from the Capitol, built in 1897.

The Library of Congress is the Nation's library. Its services extend not only to Members and committees of the Congress, but to the executive and judicial branches of government, to libraries throughout the Nation and the world, and to the scholars and researchers and artists and scientists who use its resources. This was not always the case. When President John Adams signed the bill that provided for the removal of the seat of government to the new capital city of Washington in 1800, he created a reference library for Congress only. The bill provided, among other items, $5,000 "for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress—and for putting up a suitable apartment for containing them therein. . . ."

The first books were ordered from England and shipped across the Atlantic in 11 hair trunks and a map case. The Library was housed in the new Capitol, until August 1814, at which time British troops invaded Washington, and when they put the torch to the Capitol Building, the small Library was lost. Within a month former President Thomas Jefferson, living in retirement at Monticello, offered as a replacement his personal library, accumulated over a span of 50 years. As Minister to France, Jefferson had spent many afternoons at bookstalls in Paris, "turning over every book with my own hands, putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science." His library was considered one of the finest in the United States.

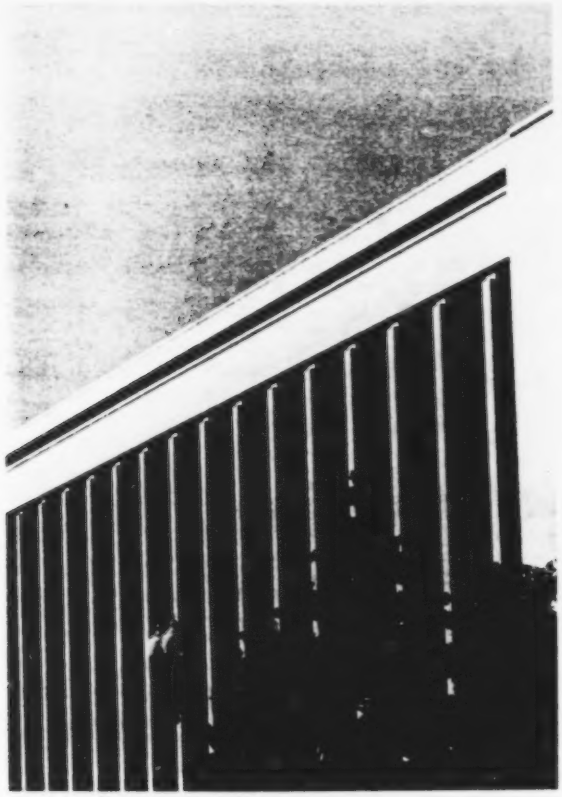
In offering the library to the Congress Jefferson wrote, "I do not know that it contains any branch of science which Congress would wish to exclude from their collection; there is, in fact, no subject to which a Member of Congress may not have occasion to refer." After considerable debate Congress in January 1815

accepted Jefferson's offer, appropriating $23,950 for the collection of 6,487 books. Thus the foundation was laid for a great national library.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

The Library of Congress complex on Capitol Hill includes three buildings. The Thomas Jefferson Building, executed in Italian Renaissance style, is the oldest of these. Heralded as the largest and costliest library structure in the world when it was completed in 1897, it is elaborately decorated with splendid sculpture, murals, and mosaics created by 50 American artists. The building's Great Hall includes towering marble columns, murals and mosaics, statuary, and stained glass, portraying themes relating to learning, knowledge, and the many pursuits of civilization. The Main Reading Room, reopening in late 1990 following extensive renovation, soars 160 feet from floor to dome. The room will house a collection of 45,000 reference books and desks for 250 readers. The adjacent Computer Catalog Center provides public access to the Library's automated catalog files through computer terminals.

The simply designed, dignified John Adams Building, faced with white Georgia marble, was opened in 1939. Bàs relief sculptures on its large bronze doors represent 12 historic figures credited with giving the art of writing to their people. They include Ts'ang Chieh, Chinese patron saint of pictographic letters; Cadmus, honored in Greek legend as the inventor of the alphabet; and Sequoyah, the renowned American Indian who invented an alphabet for the Cherokee language and taught his people to read. Ezra Winter's murals of the Canterbury Tales decorate the



The James Madison Memorial Building.

building's fifth-floor reading room.

The white marble James Madison Memorial Building, dedicated on April 24, 1980, more than doubled the Library's available Capitol Hill space. The building houses the official memorial to the Nation's fourth President, James Madison Memorial Hall, as well as eight reading rooms, offices, and storage areas for the Library's special-format collections, which number over 70 million items.

FROM PAPYRUS TO LASERS

Collections of the Library include more than 86 million items covering virtually every subject in formats that vary from papyrus to optical disk. These materials stretch along 535 miles of shelves and are being acquired at a rate of 10 items a minute. The Library has 26 million books and pamphlets in 60

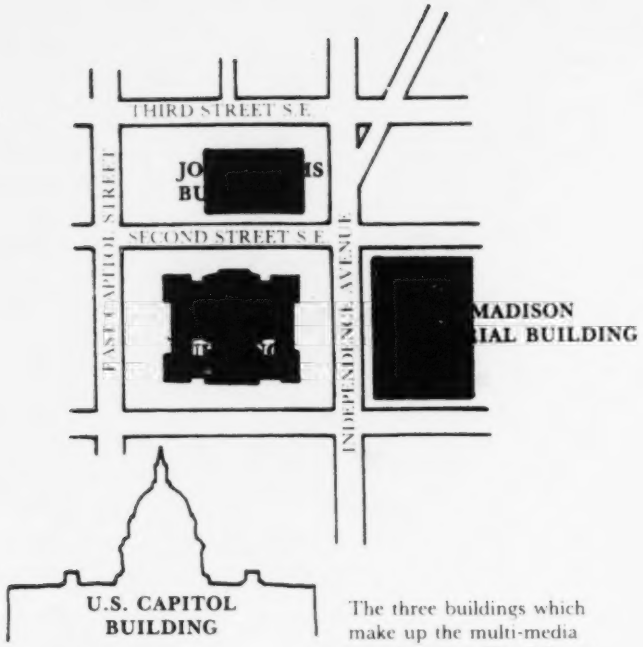
languages and more than 36 million manuscripts, among them such treasures of American history and culture as the papers of Presidents, notable families, writers, artists, and scientists. The Library has the world's largest and most comprehensive cartographic collection—almost 4 million maps and atlases, dating back to the middle of the 14th century—and a 7-million-piece music

The John Adams Building Reading Room

collection that includes autograph scores, correspondence of composers and musicians, flutes from throughout the world, and rare Stradivarius instruments, with Tourte bows.

The Library's 10 million prints and photographs provide a visual record of people, places, and events in the United States and in many foreign countries. Master photos, fine prints, works of popular and applied graphic arts, and documentary photographs are included. Approximately 75,000 serial titles are received annually; 1,200 newspapers are held

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



The three buildings which make up the multi-media encyclopedia—The Library of Congress on Capitol Hill

in the Library's permanent collections, with some dating back to the 17th century. There are also 80,000 motion picture titles, 50,000 television broadcasts, 350,000 radio transcriptions, and over one million other sound recordings, as well as about seven million microforms.

Throughout the Library buildings manuscripts, rare books, prints, and maps from collections are exhibited. On permanent display are such priceless treasures as the Library's copy of the Gutenberg Bible, one of three surviving examples printed on vellum and perfect in all respects, and the Giant Bible of Mainz, an illuminated manuscript executed by hand at about the time the Gutenberg Bible was printed. Also on permanent display is a copyright exhibit with such familiar items as Ken and Barbie dolls, a speech by Martin Luther King, and a copy of the movie "Gone With

the Wind," which trace the history of copyright through landmark cases.

In 1982, the Library began a pilot program in image preservation and retrieval using state-of-the-art optical disk technology. The pilot program evaluated the use of optical disk technology for information preservation, improved access, compact storage, and determination of the costs and benefits of the technology in a library setting. Two types of disk storage are now being used. High-resolution images of print materials are being stored on digital optical disks, while lower-resolution images of non-print materials are stored on analog videodisks. Several user stations are in place in selected reading rooms so readers may gain access to certain articles, journals, maps, music, manuscripts, motion picture stills, drawings, and photographs. Some of the earliest motion pictures produced, as well as samples of color film segments and television broadcasts, are a part of the one program.

SERVICES TO CONGRESS

The Library of Congress provides numerous services which directly or indirectly benefit all Americans. A primary role is to serve as the research and reference arm of the Congress. Through the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a department established over 60 years ago, the Library provides legislators with the information they need to govern wisely and effectively. The staff of CRS answers about 450,000 inquiries a year, ranging from simple requests for data to highly complex in-depth studies. In addition, CRS prepares bill digests, summaries of major legislation, and other reference tools to help Members and their committees stay abreast of the daily flow of legislation.

The CRS staff of 860 ranges from civil engineers and oceanographers to labor arbitrators and experts on Soviet rocketry. Their most important function is to provide objective, unbiased information to the Congress, presenting the pros and cons of each issue so that Members can make their own decisions on the basis of complete knowledge of the problems involved.

The staff of the Law Library, a department created by an Act of Congress more than 150 years ago, is the research arm of the Congress for questions regarding foreign law. The Law Library answers congressional requests for analyses of foreign legislation and legal developments. Translations of foreign laws are handled by the Law Library's legal specialists, who are proficient in 50 different languages.

COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

The Copyright Office in the Library of Congress administers the operation of the United States copyright law, a major force for the encouragement of literary and artistic endeavors. The protection afforded by copyright extends to works of the Nation's creative community, including authors, composers, artists, and filmmakers. The copyright registration record maintained by the office provides a valuable record of American cultural and technological growth and innovation.

The Copyright Card Catalog and post-1977 automated files provide an index to copyright registrations and copyright transfers in the United States from 1870 to present. More than half a million registrations are added to the record every year. The Copyright Office also provides information about copyright protection, the copyright law, and copyright registrations, renewals, and documents of

transfer and reassignments, and distributes copies and certificates of official documents relating to Copyright Office records and deposits.

Works deposited for copyright are a rich source of material for building the Library's collections. The Copyright Office transfers more than half of its current books, periodicals, music, and maps to the Library.

Also administered by the Copyright Office, through the Licensing Division, are several licenses, including statutory royalty provisions for cable television retransmissions and for jukebox performances. Through its Mask Work Unit the Copyright Office administers the Semiconductor Chip Protection Act of 1984.

SCHOLARLY RESOURCES

As its most important service to the scholarly community the Library of Congress makes its vast resources available to the public. Scholars, writers, teachers, artists, journalists, students—anyone over the age of 18 pursuing serious research—may use the Library's reading rooms, each of which has a catalog, reference collection, and reference librarians to guide the way. Readers may use computer terminals to search the Library's data bases for new titles, for sources of information on a variety of subjects, and for legislative histories.

The uses of the Library's resources are as varied as its collections. For example, a graduate student doing a comparative study of American writers may go to the Manuscript Reading Room to examine the papers of Walt Whitman and Archibald MacLeish. A violinist may use the Music Reading Room to study the notations on an original score of a Mozart string quartet. An attorney may use the Law Library's comprehensive collection of foreign

law materials. To gather background material for a spy story set in Eastern Europe, a novelist may refer to the extensive reference collections of the Main Reading Room, the European Division, and the Government Publications, Newspaper, and Current Periodical Reading Room.

For those who are not able to visit the Library a number of special services are available. Through its interlibrary loan program the Library extends the use of its books and other research materials to scholars working at academic, public, or other libraries across the country. The service is intended to aid scholarly research by making available unusual materials not readily accessible elsewhere. Through the Library's Photoduplication Service the public may purchase photographs, photostats, facsimile prints, and microfilms of research materials by mail (subject to copyright or other restrictions).

Written inquiries on specific subjects are handled by the General Reading Rooms Division and other reference divisions within the Library.

In 1980 the Library established the Council of Scholars, a group of 22 distinguished individuals representing a wide spectrum of academic fields and disciplines. These men and women are charged with examining the state of knowledge in their subject fields and exploring the extent to which the Library's collections effectively support active research in these areas.

SERVICES TO LIBRARIES

Besides maintaining the Dewey Decimal Classification system, used by many public and school libraries, the Library continually expands and develops the Library of Congress Classification system, devised at the end of the

19th century and adopted by most academic and special libraries.

Since 1900 many libraries have depended on cataloging information produced by the Library of Congress in forms that have changed from books and printed cards to machine-readable tapes. Such information saves libraries time and money.

The Library of Congress offers assistance in locating source materials in libraries in the United States and throughout the world, publishing bibliographies, guides, and selected lists of materials on many subjects, from African folklore to UFOs. It also compiles the invaluable *National Union Catalog* of books published since 1454 identifying the holdings of more than 1,200 North American libraries, as well as other union catalogs which record the locations of books in Slavic, Hebraic, Japanese, and Chinese languages.

Through its National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and a nationwide network of 160 cooperating libraries, the Library of Congress has a readership of more than 705,400 blind and physically handicapped individuals of all ages. At no cost to readers, it supplies them with books and magazines in braille or recorded on disks or cassettes together with playback equipment. Each year about 2,500 fiction and nonfiction titles that appeal to a variety of tastes are selected for recording and brailling, produced in quantity, and circulated through the network of libraries. In addition, music books and periodicals, scores, and instructional cassettes for piano, organ, guitar, and other instruments are made available in braille and recorded formats. The Service also trains volunteers for braille transcription and proofreading and for tape narration.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Chamber music concerts, poetry readings, films, lectures, and symposia are presented throughout the year in the Library's 500-seat Coolidge Auditorium, the adjacent Whittall Pavilion, the Mary Pickford Theater, and the Mumford Room. Live broadcasts of many of the concerts are carried by radio stations throughout the country. Many lectures given at the Library are published. Of special note here: The Coolidge Auditorium will be closed for renovation for about three years, beginning November 1989.

Through its exhibits program, the Library displays examples of the treasures in its collections, including prints and photographs, maps, musical scores, rare books, and manuscripts. Many of the exhibits travel to libraries and museums across the nation.

Especially popular is the lunchtime concert series sponsored by the Library's American Folklife Center. Once a month, from May through October, musical groups representing a variety of folk traditions perform on the Neptune Plaza in front of the Library's Jefferson Building.

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress is a national catalyst for stimulating public interest in books, reading, and the printed word. Its symposia, exhibits, and publications are supported by tax-deductible contributions from individuals and corporations. "A Nation of Readers," "Read More About It," "Books Make a Difference," and "Year of the Young Reader," are reading promotion themes used nationally and by affiliated Centers for the Book in a number of states.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Library of Congress is open to the public every day except Christmas and New Year's Day.

Hours All exhibit areas are open to the public between 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., except the Madison Gallery, and the Great Hall and lower gallery of the Thomas Jefferson Building, which are open from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Exhibit hours in the Performing Arts Library in the Kennedy Center are 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday; it is closed on Sunday, Monday, and holidays.

Information Counters The Library sales counter is located in the Thomas Jefferson Building (open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday (closed Sundays). A new sales shop is scheduled to open in the James Madison Memorial Building, on the first floor, in early summer. Library of Congress publications, postcards, recordings, slides, facsimiles, posters, folklife items, and other articles may be purchased.

Tours Free, 45-minute guided tours begin at the ground-floor entrance lobby of the Thomas Jefferson Building every hour, on the hour, from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Group tours should be arranged in advance. For further information call (202) 707–5458. An 18-minute slide presentation, "America's Library," provides visitors with an excellent introduction to the Library of Congress. "America's Library" is shown hourly every day, from 8:45 a.m. to 8:45 p.m., in the Orientation Theater, ground-floor lobby area, Thomas Jefferson Building.

Calendar of Events A monthly listing of exhibits, poetry readings, concerts, and other special events at the Library—the *Calendar of Events*—is free upon request at the information and sales counters, or by mail from the

Library's Printing and Processing Section, Central Services Division.

Photography Photographs for personal use may be taken in exhibit areas. The use of flash attachments is not permitted in any reading room. Permission to use a tripod must be obtained from the Information Office, James Madison Memorial Building, Room LM-105.

Snack Bar/Cafeteria The Library cafeteria, located on the sixth floor of the Madison Building, is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday. In addition, there are snack bars, some offering counter service, with food and beverage vending machines, in all Library buildings.

Restrooms Restrooms are located near the entrances of each Library building.

Telephones Public telephones are located near the entrances of each Library building.

The Library of Congress

Washington, D.C. 20540

(202) 707-5000

1989

'6

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

17

Main Reading Room in the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress (now undergoing renovation)